

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas [Ms. JACKSON-LEE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia [Ms. NORTON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

STATUS OF THE CNMI

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Hawaii [Mrs. MINK] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii. Mr. Speaker, I have introduced a bill today that will allow the people of the CNMI to decide whether they will abide by all of the laws of the United States or whether they chose to seek independence.

Reports of abuses in the CNMI are not new. Reports surfaced as long as 13 years ago. In response, Congress directed the establishment of a joint program with the CNMI to respond to this widening range of abuses. After 3 years, these agencies investigating these abuses report the negative trends worsening. They report:

Chinese garment and construction workers sign shadow contracts with a government recruitment agency before leaving China for employment in the CNMI. These contracts restrict their civil rights and threaten to return them to China if workers make labor complaints while in the CNMI.

Wages for domestic maids average \$0.64 an hour for an average work week of 72 hours. The domestic service sector averages the highest percentage of labor complaints out of all sectors.

Many businesses in the CNMI are not subject to the Fair Labor Standards Act, resulting in their failing to pay the employees, going bankrupt and eventually going into another line of business under a different name.

The CNMI does not require visas for investors. A business entry permit allows foreign businessmen to enter the CNMI with \$50,000 to set up a business. There is no evidence that the CNMI verifies or authenticates the amount, nature, or source of the claimed investment.

Reports have found an appearance of a large number of underage dancers and other underage workers in the CNMI. Many of these persons are alleged to be engaged in prostitution. CNMI lacks the resources to determine the authenticity of birth certificates and other documents and therefore in many cases simply admits these persons on the basis of approved work permits. In addition, many of these nonresident alien victims fail to report their cases to authorities because of fear of retaliations or loss of employment.

The INS reports the CNMI has had limited success in improving immigration control, including adjudications, examinations, inspec-

tion, and investigations. CNMI immigration worksite enforcement is nonexistent.

The CNMI can ship duty-free goods to the United States under General Note 3(a)(iv) of the Harmonized Tariff Schedule, which provides duty-free entry to qualifying products of the CNMI and other U.S. insular possession. The duty-free and quota-free preferences coupled with the CNMI's local control of its immigration policy and its minimum wage rate, have created a loophole that enables foreign interests to establish apparel productions facilities in the CNMI with unlimited access to the U.S. market, thereby giving the CNMI garment industry advantages that are not enjoyed in the US market.

The CNMI has flooded the islands with low-cost foreign labor, resulting in a huge population increase and high unemployment among native U.S. Citizens. As a result, many indigenous people are living at the poverty level or below.

These abuses are happening in our own backyard. Because of that, we cannot look the other way and allow them to continue when they are occurring in the U.S. jurisdiction.

The covenant agreement adopted by Congress and the CNMI gave local control of immigration and the minimum wage to the Commonwealth. In establishing the covenant, the residents of the CNMI expressed concern that Federal immigration laws would permit excessive immigration to the islands from neighboring countries thus overwhelming the local culture and community. Isn't it ironic that these policies have produced the opposite result. U.S. citizens are now a minority of the population. Temporary alien workers now comprise 60 percent of the total labor force and 90 percent of the private sector labor force.

In response to calls that the CNMI be subject to U.S. immigration and wage laws, the Governor and various local leaders spoke out stating they would prefer independence than to fall under our laws. My response to the Government and other local leaders is this: OK. Lets bring this issue to the citizens who live in the CNMI. Lets ask the people: Shall the CNMI be governed under U.S. immigration and wage laws or shall the CNMI seek independence.

The days of status quo have come and gone. We now must take responsibility for the abuses occurring and take measures to remedy them. If the CNMI does not agree, they are free to choose self-determination. However, if they are to remain as a part of the United States then they must adhere to all of our laws.

GOOD NEWS FOR THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. NEUMANN] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. NEUMANN. I rise tonight to bring some good news to the American people.

I spent some time in my district on Thursday and Friday, and I had a chance to talk with lots of folks and it occurred to me as I was talking with the people back home that the concepts of the tax cut bill actually being

signed into law and the amount of taxes that people are going to pay next year having actually gone down is something that the folks back home did not understand very well yet.

So I thought I would start this evening with a little bit of discussion of some good news for the American people, for people that are working and paying taxes into this Government. Taxes are going down and it is good news. It is the first time in 16 years it has happened. It has happened at the same time that we have actually balanced the budget for the first time since 1969.

□ 2030

I thought what I would do to start this evening is just talk through those tax cuts a little bit, because there is something in the tax cut package that affects virtually every American citizen that is working and paying taxes today.

I thought I would start with the one that is going to affect the most families. In Wisconsin, the \$400 per child tax cut affects 550,000 Wisconsin families. In all of our families back home in Wisconsin that have children under the age of 17, next year, for 1998, they should figure out how much taxes they would have owed to the U.S. Government, or to Washington, and subtract \$400 off the bottom line for each one of those children.

Let me say that again, so it is crystal clear exactly what this \$400 per child tax cut means. If there are children in the home under the age of 17, the family would go through and figure out how much taxes they would have owed to the U.S. Government, to Washington, and they will then simply subtract \$400 per child off the bottom line.

For a family with three kids under the age of 17, for a family of five, like our family used to be, our kids are older now, but like our family used to be, if you have three kids under the age of 17, that family could subtract \$1,200 off the amount of taxes that they would have owed to the U.S. Government.

Let me put this another way. For that family of five with three kids at home, they should in January of next year go into their place of employment and reduce their withholding taxes, reduce the amount of money that their employer is sending to Washington each month, by \$100, because, you see, that \$1,200 for the 3 kids divided up over the 12 months is \$100 a month.

Again, this bill is signed into law; this is not political rhetoric or promises. I cannot count how many people in Wisconsin said to me, "I will believe it when I see it." It is done; it is signed into law. That family of five, in January of next year, should keep \$100 more a month in their own home instead of sending it out here to Washington, DC.

A lot of folks say, "What about education? There are other things that you need to be doing in Washington